



Charlotte Mason's House of Education,
Scale How, Ambleside, UK, 2009

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BOOKS.

A New Handwriting (for Teachers), by M. M. Bridges (H. Frowde, 5/-). Years ago, perhaps five years ago, we heard of a lady who was elaborating, by means of the study of old Italian and other manuscripts, a "system of beautiful handwriting" which could be taught to children. We have waited patiently, though not without some urgency, for the production of this new kind of "copy-book." We have felt that the need for such an effort was very great, for the distinctly commonplace writing taught from existing copy-books, however painstaking and legible, cannot but have a rather vulgarising effect both on the writer and the reader of such manuscript. At last the lady, Mrs. Robert Bridges, has succeeded in her tedious and difficult undertaking, and this book for teachers will enable them to teach their pupils a style of writing which is pleasant to acquire because it is beautiful to behold. It is surprising how quickly young children, even those already confirmed in "ugly" writing, take to this "new handwriting." We shall welcome Mrs. Bridges' effort in proportion as we feel, with her, that, "the average hands, which are the natural outcome of the old copy-book writing, degraded by haste, seem to owe their common ugliness to the mean type from which they sprang."

The Song of the Golden Bough, and other Poems, by C. Battersby (Constable, 3/6). Those of our readers who recollect *The Flute Player* and *The Lament of Niobe*, and who took joy in *The Ferry of Dreams*, which appeared in our last number, will give Mr. Caryl Battersby's volume of verse the sincere welcome which we keep for the writer who satisfies us. Mr. Battersby always satisfies. He takes hold of his subject with the grace born of strength, sure of itself, and able to measure its task. Here is a line which satisfies from the perfect poise of sound and sense—

"And let the soul sway lightly as a leaf"—

and this from the same poem, *On the Hill*—

“ Here, dimly brooding, find
The lark's thought, when the mother and the nest
Are all forgot, and he beyond the wind
Unlocks the silver fountain of his breast.”

Mr. Battersby is never weak ; every line expresses fitly that which he has to say. He gives us no rough diamonds, and yet he never finishes to the point of smoothness. We cannot discover that the author of these poems has much to unlearn ; what he may have to learn of, more and more, is, the passion of humanity

An Idyll of the Dawn, by Mrs. Fred Reynolds (James Bowden, 3/6). We began by objecting to the title of this book, but Mrs. Reynolds justifies herself; any faithful presentation of child life is of the nature of an idyll. We have idylls of child life which have, on the whole, the effect of tableaux seen behind a transparent veiling, uncommonly pretty but a little glorified. Mrs. Reynolds in these recollections of childhood, probably

her own, gives us children as they grow up invest the little folk. But how egotising are all the small occasions of child thought and childish aims ; it is so instructive as it is charming ; it is the remoteness of " the Powers " to the always thus far away ; but, on the other hand, to realise that children have thoughts, dream their own dreams, are not of the ken of the grown-up world, is better if they get themselves out of the boundaries. *An Idyll* is a reading, except that it may not be a reading of " the Powers " ; read aloud, *Capricious*, by the Duchess of Leinster, these charming papers were composed, not written to advance in this too purposeful age, it is rather a *Memory*, is very sweet ; so *Alone* is a touching study in greys which gives its title to the volume.

Foreign Classics for English Readers is pleasant to Mrs. Oliphant's name so characteristic of her wide culture already had occasion to thank the *Black Classics*, and the debt to the series of *Foreign Classics* is hardly a trifling handbook and find in the thought which we associate with the volumes dealing with the Augustan *Grand Monarque*, are especially " been with the rose " ; they have *Memories*, and have brought us the *gens*. Perhaps the *Molière* volume written by the editors, Mrs. Oliphant's glimpses of the King in the raised him and his Court. We entered into his soul ; and we loved his bed, for instance. The *Coligny* is the keystone of the *Montenapkin*, the brilliant crowd of the King, and the four, whom glorious and admirable, Fénelon, *Lauplin*. It is astonishing that drawn from the innumerable volumes of the religious throes which contain a beautiful personality, and have a fascinating story of the Port-Roy-

her own, gives us children as they are, without the charm with which grown ups invest the little folk. But how charming they are as they are! How engrossing are all the small occurrences of their lives! The volume is as instructive as it is charming; it is good to have such a sincere picture of child thought and childish aims; though it is a little sad to realise the remoteness of "the Powers" to the little folk. We hope they are not always thus far away; but, on the other hand, it is wholesome for us elders to realise that children have a life of their own, think their own thoughts, dream their own dreams, labour in their own devices, altogether out of the ken of the grown-up world; and, may we add, that children thrive better if they get themselves some of this child life with its almost impassable boundaries. *An Idyll of the Dawn* is quite fit for children's reading, except that it may not be well to emphasise the notion of the aloofness of "the Powers"; read aloud, with omissions, all would be right.

Capriccios, by the Duchess of Leeds (Hodder & Stoughton, 6/-). One must read these charming papers with their interpretative title. They are capriccios, not written to advance any thesis, moral or intellectual; and, in this too purposeful age, it is refreshing to come on such a volume. *Pan, a Memory*, is very sweet; so too is *The Bird-Charmer*, and *Miss Anne* is a touching study in greys. The story we care for least is that which gives its title to the volume.

Foreign Classics for English Readers (Blackwood, 1/- each). It is pleasant to see Mrs. Oliphant's name identified with a legacy to the public so characteristic of her wide culture and liberal sympathies. We have already had occasion to thank Messrs. Blackwood for their series of Ancient Classics, and the debt we owe them for the production of this series of Foreign Classics is hardly less. It is amazing to take up little shilling handbooks and find in them the sense of leisure and living thought which we associate with literature, properly so called. The volumes dealing with the Augustan age of French literature, the epoch of the *Grand Monarque*, are especially attractive. The several authors have "been with the rose"; they have been delving in the mine of French Memoirs, and have brought us the sparkling dust, at any rate, of many gems. Perhaps the *Molière* volume should be read first. It is charmingly written by the editors, Mrs. Oliphant and Mr. F. Tarver. Here we have passing glimpses of the King in his gay youth, and of the players who amused him and his Court. We see how Molière grew in strength as the iron entered into his soul; and we have droll glimpses of him, as making the King's bed, for instance. The volume on *Saint Simon*, by Clifton W. Collins, is the keystone of the arch. Here we have, in the words of Maeterlinck, the brilliant crowd which rustles round the throne of the great King, and the four, whom this philosopher singles out as grave, gracious and admirable, Fénélon, de Chevreuse, de Beauvilliers, and the Dauphin. It is astonishing that so living a presentment could have been drawn from the innumerable volumes of the memoir.

In the volume on *Pascal*, by Principal Tulloch, we are made sensible of the religious throes which convulsed the period, are in touch with a beautiful personality, and have unfolded to us, once again, the always fascinating story of the Port-Royalists.

That on *Corneille and Racine*, by Henry M. Trollope, if not quite so interesting as the other volumes, is equally necessary to the understanding of the life and literature of this great epoch. Racine's connection with Port-Royal is an added interest.

Rabelais, by Sir W. Besant. We go back a couple of centuries to the "always young," always audacious, Rabelais. "For very shame he must be hidden away," his great influence on European literature notwithstanding; but we are glad of an introduction to him so full of interest, in which we can make the acquaintance of Panurge, Pantagruel, and the rest, if not at first hand, at any rate at a good second hand.

Montaigne, by the Rev. L. Collins. A charming introduction to the always charming essayist and egotist!

Calderon, by A. J. Hassall. Most English readers will be glad of so adequate an introduction to the gracious, dignified, and profoundly religious, Spanish dramatist.

Cervantes, by Mrs. Oliphant. Cervantes is a name to conjure with, and it is good to read how "from my tenderest years I loved the gentle art of poetry," and how "such was his appetite for reading that he read even the torn bits of printed paper in the streets." The volume contains an admirable sketch of the great novel and increases our acquaintance with Sancho, Dapple, and the valiant Don.

Petrarch, by Henry Reeve. It seems to us that this monograph of the second great Italian poet of the fourteenth century has unique value for English readers. Petrarch is, for many of us, no more than a name illustrated by a few translations and ever associated with the name of Laura. It is curious, by the way, that the two great Italian poets should have matured their souls upon purely ideal passions. Here is a delightful glimpse of the young Petrarch, from a letter to his brother, written years afterwards:—"Don't you recollect what pains, what useless pains, we took to preserve the exquisite whiteness of our linen, what dressing and undressing there was morning and evening, what fear lest a breath of air should disturb the elegance of our curls," and yet Wordsworth writes of this same young dandy in after years, "he was a man of disciplined spirit, who withdrew from the too busy world . . . that he might comprehend and see in just proportions and relations."

Goethe, by A. Hayward. This is a very interesting volume, especially so the chapters founded upon the *Knabenjähre*, and dealing with the Weimar days.

Adventures of the Comte de la Mulette during the Reign of Terror, by Bernard Capes (Blackwood and Sons, 6/-). The subject of this romance is an old one, but it seems to us that the author has made a new departure in the graceful way in which he has caught the philosophic temper of an age when every instructed man was a philosopher, not only by nature, but by study and pursuit; and the captivating whimsicality born of a curious conjunction of circumstances—French nature, aristocratic breeding, philosophy, and, "the Reign of Terror." The way in which the noble and gracious hero and heroine subside into good circumstances upon the making of salads for London *gourmands* is deliciously whimsical; but we warn readers to be prepared for horrors that haunt you like a nightmare.

Walthamstow, a Journal kept in the
Walthamstow and Co., 6/-). Mr. Haslam
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Elements of Physical Educat
 (Blackwood, 4/-). The first part of
 physiology and psychology of mu
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 ball exercises, marching, etc.

Idlehurst, a Journal kept in the Country, by John Haslam (Smith, Elder and Co., 6/-). Mr. Haslam has treated us to a quite charming book. His friends, his cottage neighbours, his reading and his pictures, the views from his house, and, above all, his garden, his opinions and those of his friends, come before us in the course of a day-by-day chronicle of the simple doings of a country gentleman. We are never disappointed, never out of sympathy with the author, who carries us on with his easy chat, which is yet in faultless English, not without a certain literary aroma. Mr. Haslam has the rare gift of talking about his own doings and surroundings without a trace of egotism; and we are not sure but that we like this quite the best of all the pleasing "garden books" which have entertained us in the last few years.

The Scenery of Switzerland (new edition), by Sir John Lubbock (Macmillan, 6/-). The time will come when nobody will be content to enjoy scenery without the added pleasure of comprehension. Why this broad valley, that tumultuous mountain heap? It is to this intelligent curiosity on the part of the author that we owe Sir John Lubbock's volume on *The Scenery of Switzerland and the causes to which it is due*. "I longed," he says, "to know what forces had raised the mountains, had hollowed out the lakes and directed the rivers." We venture to say that a trip to Switzerland would be ten times as enjoyable after a careful study of this able, well-informed and simply written volume.

The Quiver for 1898 (Cassell & Co., 8/6) is, as usual, full of interesting papers, notably that on the *Queen's Maunday Gifts* and that on Chinese illustrations of Gospel History. We notice a distinct missionary spirit in this volume, but we do not like the story of the lady missionary who is wooed by a native king and a fellow-missionary, and is triumphantly married to the latter, notwithstanding the appearance of a former lover, a professor, in the background; the mission-field has its own romance, the romance of the highest passion of which the soul is capable. But it is a thankless office to offer any adverse criticism where so much is excellent.

Beneath the Banner, by F. J. Cross (new edition) (Cassell, 1/-). The author professes to offer a series of short anecdotal sketches to serve as a first introduction to the careers of men and women "whose lives are worthy of admiration and imitation." It is a wonderful volume for a shilling. Everyone seems to be in it from Alice Ayres to the Princess Alice, from Father Damien to Sir Colin Campbell. Children, the maids, young people in workshops and Sunday Schools, cottage neighbours,—all would read it with pleasure.

Elements of Physical Education, by D. Lennox and A. Sturrock (Blackwood, 4/-). The first part of the volume by Dr. Lennox treats of the physiology and psychology of muscular exercise, the second, by Mr. Sturrock, superintendent of the Dundee Public Gymnasium, gives an exhaustive series of physical movements with capital plates and tunes for bar-bell exercises, marching, etc.